



When to Seek Health Care for the Flu

- Symptoms of the new strain of influenza, known as H1N1 flu are similar to the symptoms of seasonal flu.
- Flu symptoms may be different in certain people.
- Common symptoms of the H1N1 flu are:
 - A sudden onset of headache, fever (temperature usually greater than 100 degrees), nasal congestion, runny nose, cough, body aches, ear aches, sore throat, and extreme tiredness. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea are being reported in some cases, but not as often.
- Call your provider if you have two or more of the following symptoms:
 - A sudden onset of headache, fever (temperature greater than 100 degrees), nasal congestion, runny nose, cough, body aches, ear aches, sore throat, extreme tiredness. Nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea have been reported in some cases of flu, especially in children.
- Your provider may prescribe an antiviral medication that may reduce the severity of symptoms and/or length of time of illness from flu **ESPECIALLY** if you seek medical care within the first 2 days of symptoms. Antiviral medications are not prescribed for every person with the flu- generally only persons who are most likely to become extremely ill with the flu or who care for someone most likely to become extremely ill or those who are hospitalized are persons who may be prescribed antiviral medication.
- Home is the safest place to be if flu symptoms are not severe.
- **DO NOT GO TO AN EMERGENCY ROOM UNLESS YOU HAVE A LIFE THREATENING ILLNESS**; such as if you are short of breath or wheezing, if you are coughing up blood, or if you have a history of heart disease and are having chest pain.
- Call your health care provider:
 - If you have a fever for more than three to five days whether or not you have already been treated or
 - if you feel better and get a fever again.
 - If you are unable to drink fluids. This can cause dehydration.
 - If you have dark urine or feel dizzy when standing.
 - If you live with someone who has been ill with flu or if you have been in close contact (within 6 feet) of someone who has the flu. You may be given medication to help prevent or reduce the symptoms of flu.
 - The VA Cares about you.
 - If you have further questions or wish to speak with someone during clinic hours, please contact your Primary Care Provider or local medical center.
Hot Springs 1-800-764-5370 Ft Meade 1-800-743-1070
- If you are calling after clinic hours, please call the VISN 23 Nurse VA Health Care Advice Line at 1-866-687-7382.